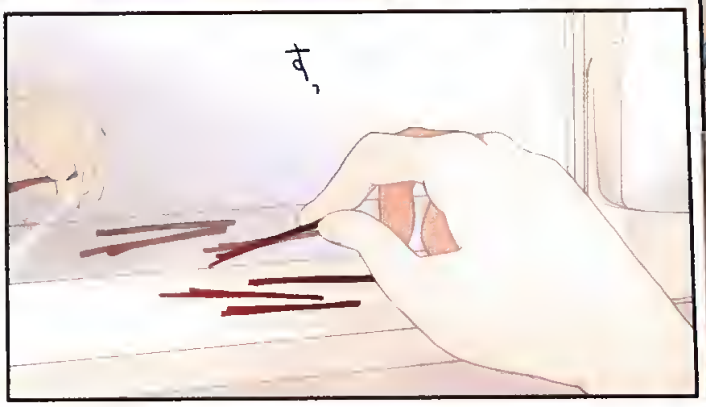
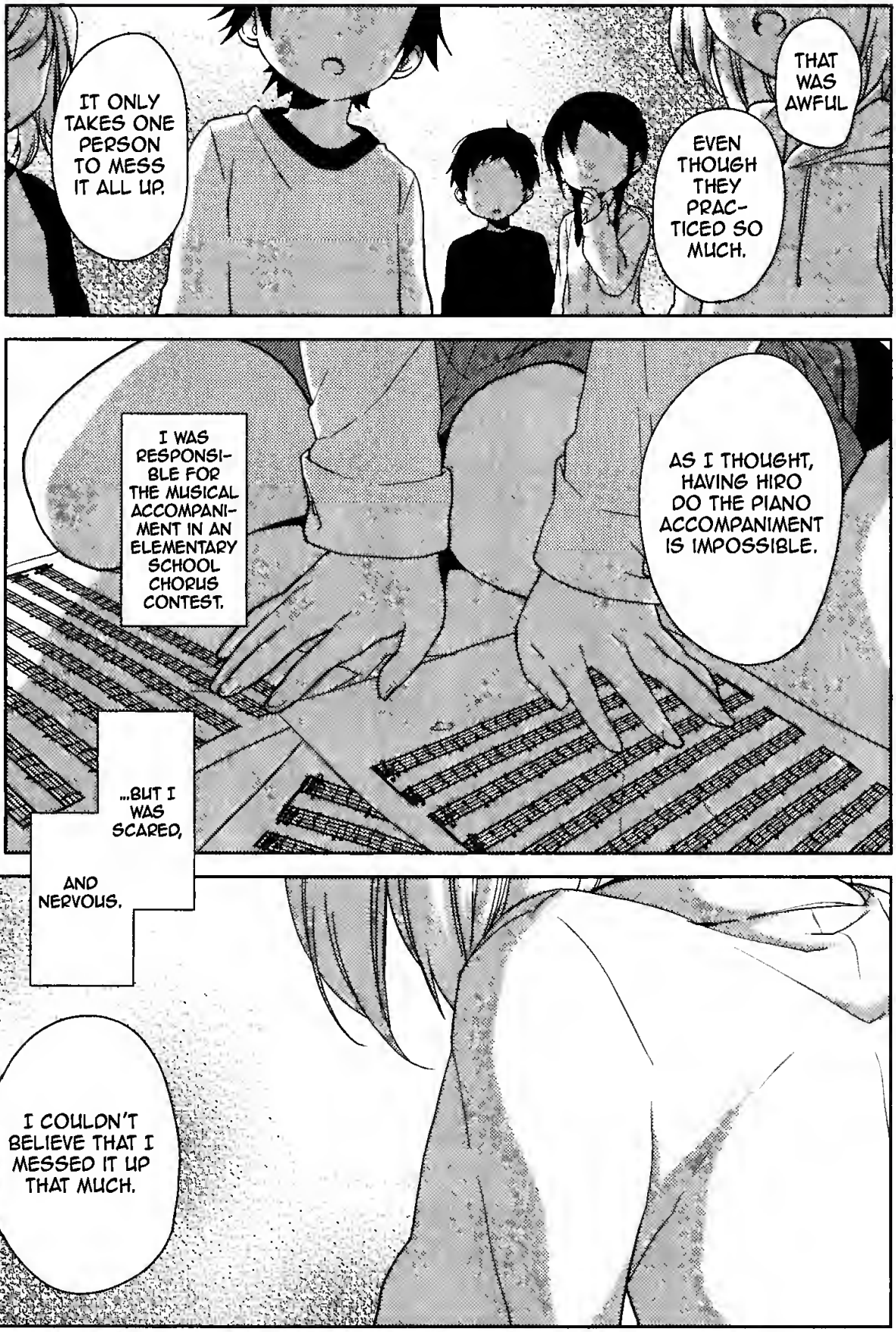
A DEPRESSED LOOKING HIRO.
SHE WILL HAVE TO CONFRONT HER
FEELINGS BEFORE...



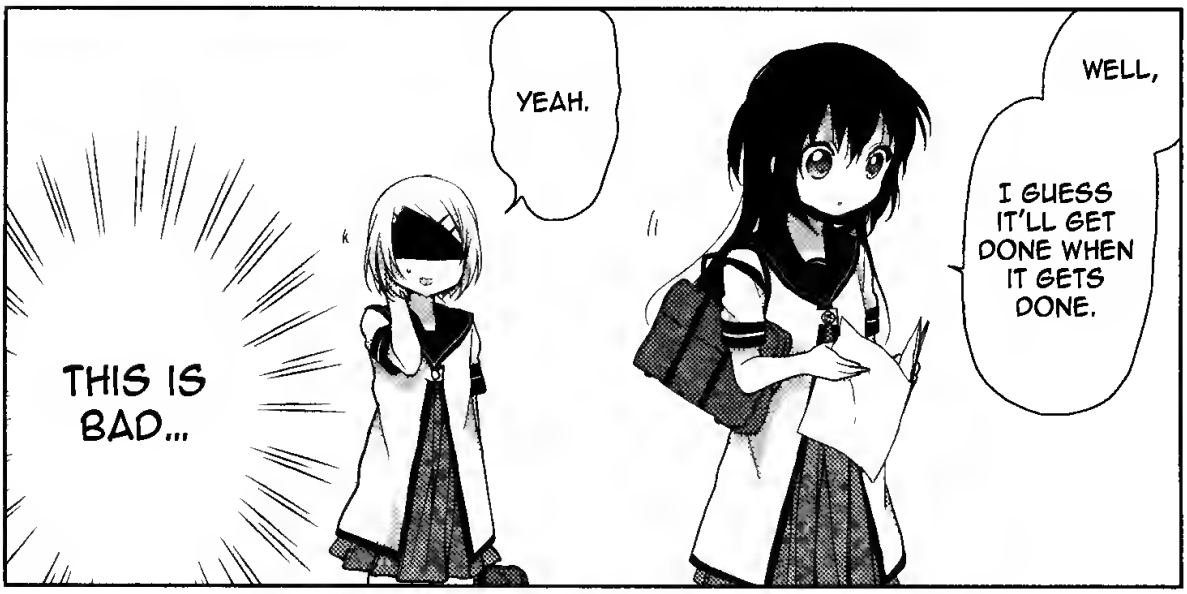
STAGE 3: ETERNITY MAY EXIST, OR IT MAY NOT

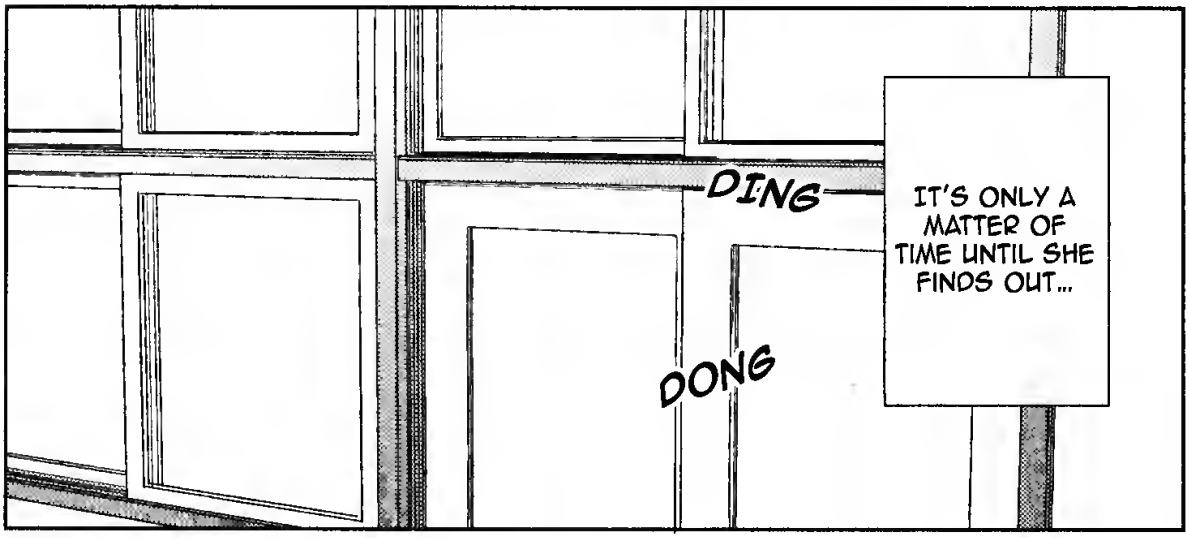

IT ONLY TAKES ONE PERSON TO MESS IT ALL UP.
EVEN THOUGH THEY PRAC-TICED SO MUCH.
THAT WAS AWFUL
I WAS RESPONSI-BLE FOR THE MUSICAL ACCOMPANI-MENT IN AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CHORUS CONTEST.
AS I THOUGHT, HAVING HIRO DO THE PIANO ACCOMPANIMENT IS IMPOSSIBLE.
...BUT I WAS SCARED, AND NERVOUS.
I COULDN'T BELIEVE THAT I MESSED IT UP THAT MUCH.

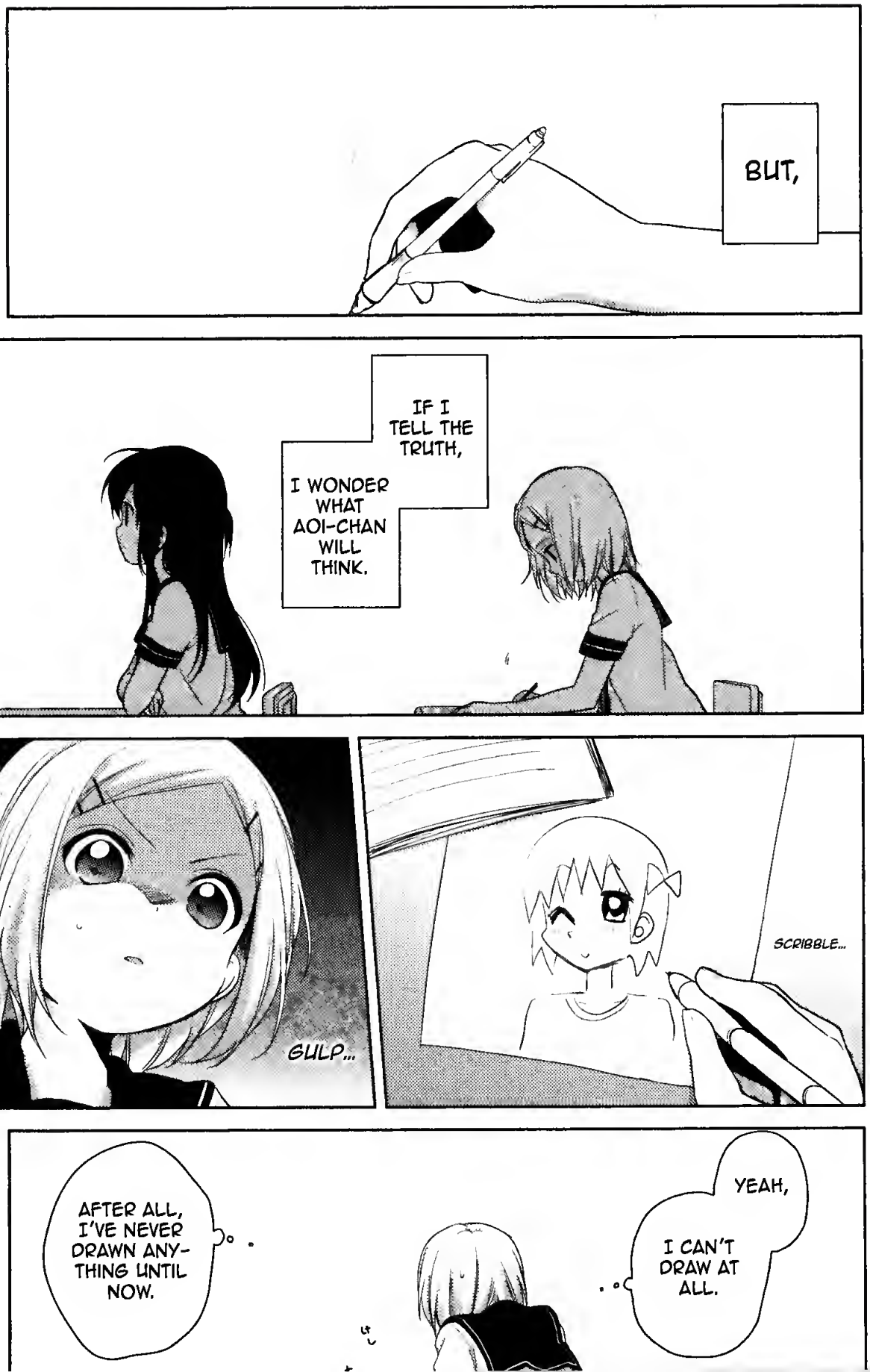
I'M SORRY,
I'M SORRY FOR RUINING EVERYTHING.
I WAS SCARED AND COULDN'T FACE EVERY-ONE.
...ALL I COULD DO WAS HIDE MY FACE.
ALL I COULD DO WAS BLEND INTO THE CROWD.
SIGH...
.....
HEY.

HEY!
GASP
WHAT ARE YOU DAY-DREAMING ABOUT?
?
(IT'S NOTHING)
WHAT IS IT?
ABOUT HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO FINISH A DRAWING?
THINGS LIKE CHARACTER DESIGN AND SKETCHING.
AND HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO COLOR IT?
THE TRUTH IS, SHE CAN'T DRAW.
UMM,
IT-
IT VARIES FROM PERSON TO PERSON.
THAT MUCH I KNOW.
I MEANT IN YOUR CASE. HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE YOU?

WHAT SHOULD I DO?
IT'S TOO LATE TO TELL HER I CAN'T DRAW.
HM...I WONDER...


THIS IS BAD...
YEAH.
WELL, I GUESS IT'LL GET DONE WHEN IT GETS DONE.

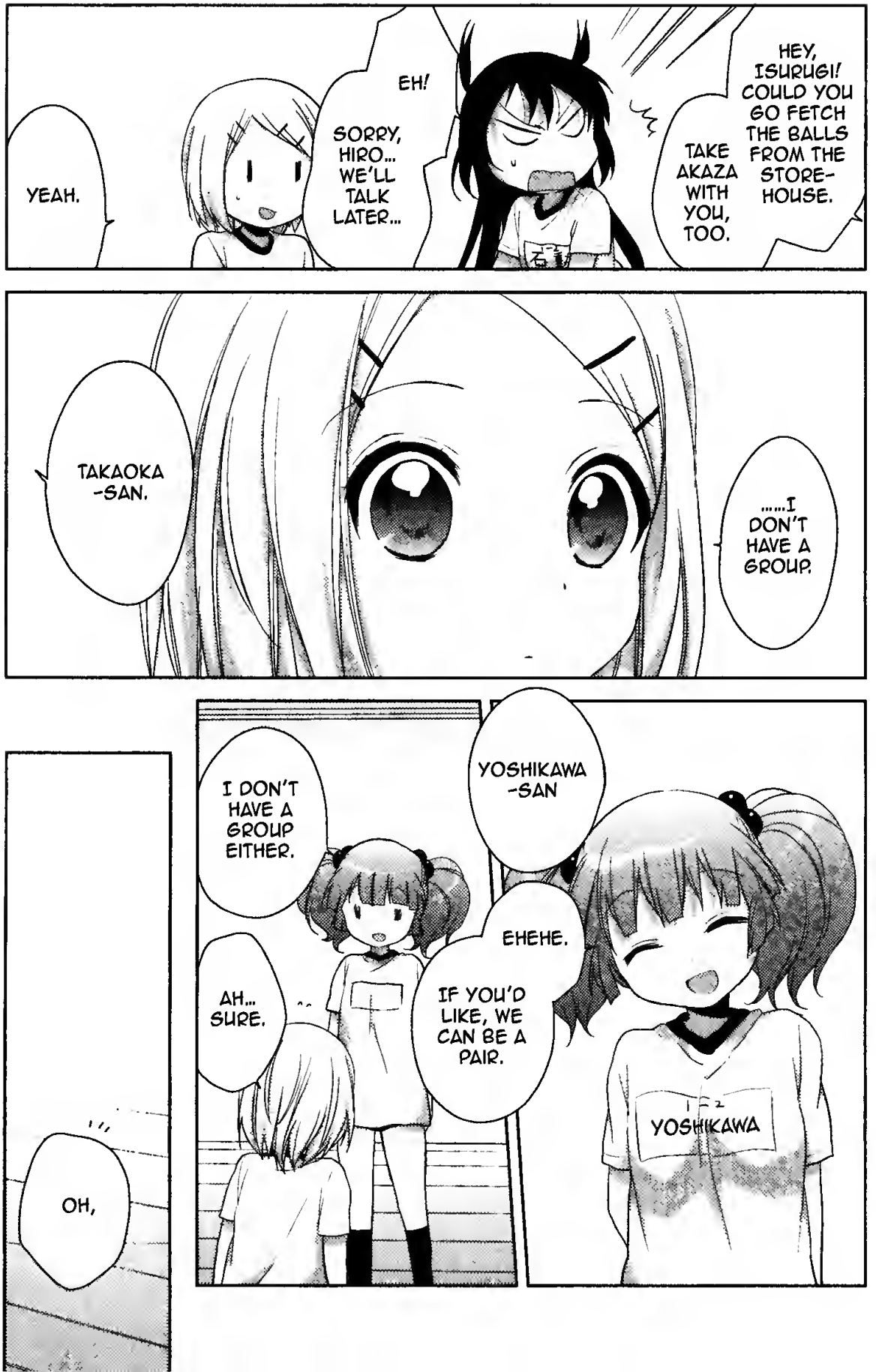

DING
DONG
IT'S ONLY A MATTER OF TIME UNTIL SHE FINDS OUT...

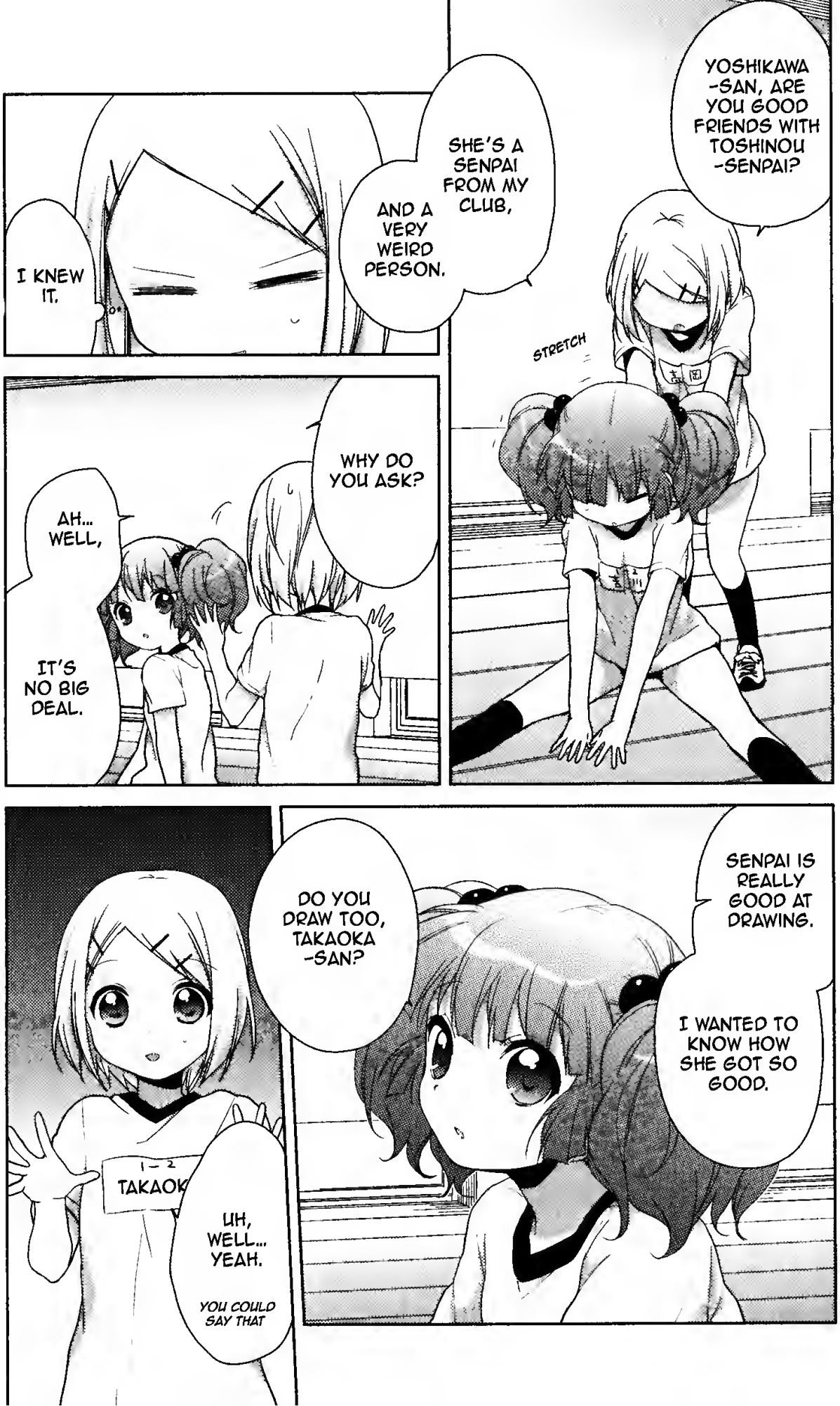

BUT,
IF I TELL THE TRUTH,
I WONDER WHAT AOI-CHAN WILL THINK.
GULP...
SCRIBBLE...
AFTER ALL, I'VE NEVER DRAWN ANYTHING UNTIL NOW.
YEAH,
I CAN'T DRAW AT ALL.

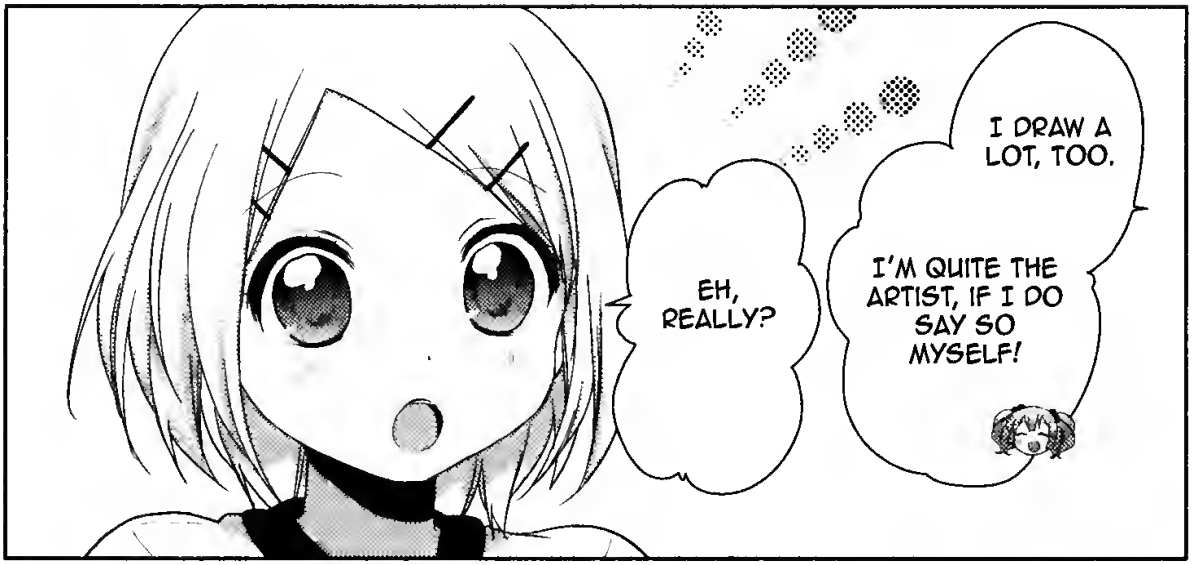
I WONDER HOW YOU GET GOOD AT DRAWING IN THE FIRST PLACE.
IT'S SOMETHING I DON'T UNDER-STAND.
OH?
YOU'RE THE FIRST YEAR STUDENT FROM THE OTHER DAY.
WHAT'S UP?
SORRY TO DISTURB YOU, BUT I WANT TO ASK YOU SOMETHING.
SENPAI, HOW DID YOU GET GOOD AT DRAWING?
LIKE...HOW DID YOU PRACTICE?
WELL,
THERE'S ONLY ONE THING THAT'S IMPORTANT.

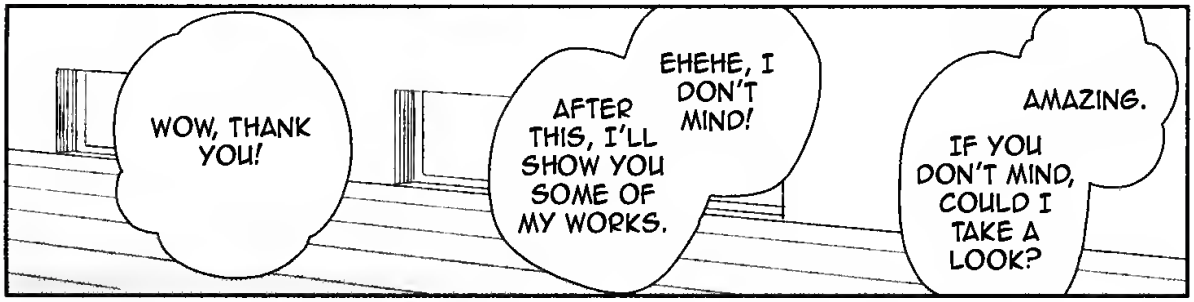
SHE SAID HEART TWICE.
U-HUH...
THREE THINGS!?
AND ALSO HEART!!
AND THAT'S HEART!
ALSO, BELIEF!
AND EFFORT!
S...
AFTER THAT-
BUT THE MOST IMPORTANT THING OF ALL IS THE FEELING OF "FUN".
SMACK
OUCH!

T-THANK YOU VERY MUCH...
WHAT A WEIRD PERSON ...
SORRY, FIRST YEAR STUDENT.
WE'LL TALK SOME OTHER TIME.
YOU'RE ON DAY DUTY TODAY.
HUH, IS THAT SO?
UGH...
...I HAVEN'T LEARNED A THING.
1-2
TAKAMURA
HIRO! LET'S...
OKAY, EVERYONE GET IN GROUPS OF THREE.
PIIIII

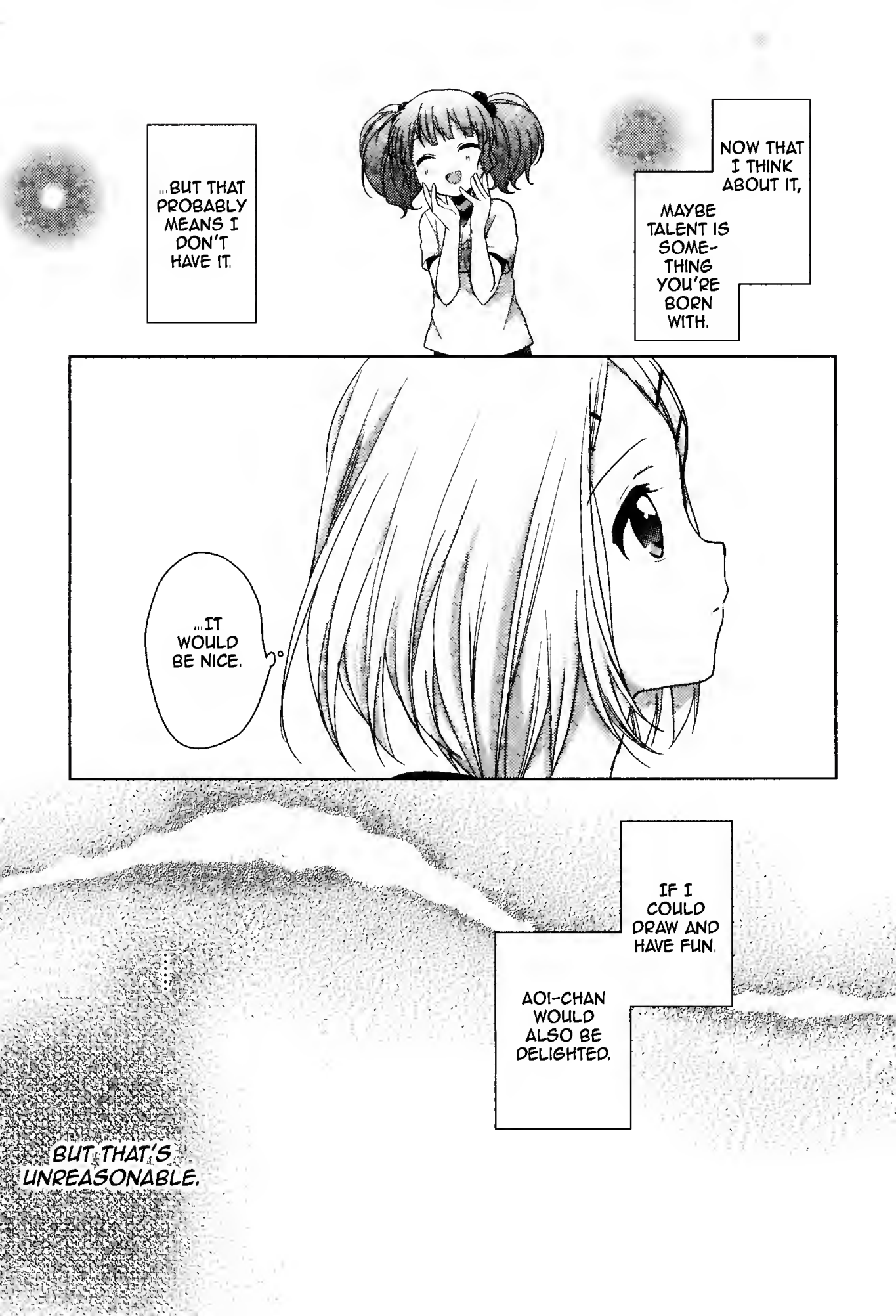

HEY, ISURUGI! COULD YOU GO FETCH THE BALLS FROM THE STORE-HOUSE.
TAKE AKAZA WITH YOU, TOO.
EH!
SORRY, HIRO... WE'LL TALK LATER...
YEAH.
TAKAOKA -SAN.
.....I DON'T HAVE A GROUP.
YOSHIKAWA -SAN
I DON'T HAVE A GROUP EITHER.
EHEHE.
IF YOU'D LIKE, WE CAN BE A PAIR.
AH... SURE.
YOSHIKAWA
OH,


YOSHIKAWA -SAN, ARE YOU GOOD FRIENDS WITH TOSHINOU -SENPAI?
STRETCH
SHE'S A SENPAI FROM MY CLUB,
AND A VERY WEIRD PERSON.
I KNEW IT.
WHY DO YOU ASK?
AH... WELL,
IT'S NO BIG DEAL.
SENPAI IS REALLY GOOD AT DRAWING.
I WANTED TO KNOW HOW SHE GOT SO GOOD.
DO YOU DRAW TOO, TAKAOKA -SAN?
1-2
TAKAOK
UH, WELL... YEAH.
YOU COULD SAY THAT


I DRAW A LOT, TOO.
I'M QUITE THE ARTIST, IF I DO SAY SO MYSELF!
EH, REALLY?


AMAZING.
IF YOU DON'T MIND, COULD I TAKE A LOOK?
EHEHE, I DON'T MIND!
AFTER THIS, I'LL SHOW YOU SOME OF MY WORKS.
WOW, THANK YOU!

YOSHIKAWA -SAN, HOW DO YOU PRACTICE?
LET'S SEE.
THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IS HEART!
ALSO, BELIEF!
IS THIS DÉJÀ VU?


NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT,
MAYBE TALENT IS SOME-THING YOU'RE BORN WITH.
...BUT THAT PROBABLY MEANS I DON'T HAVE IT.
...IT WOULD BE NICE.
IF I COULD DRAW AND HAVE FUN.
AOI-CHAN WOULD ALSO BE DELIGHTED.
BUT THAT'S UNREASONABLE.

AOI -CHAN
THANKS FOR GIVING ME THESE.
OH?
EVEN THOUGH YOU LOOKED SO CUTE,
ARE YOU NOT PLEASED WITH THEM?
THAT'S NOT IT...
HMM, WELL, WHATEVER.
I'M PRETTY TIRED FROM TODAY.
I HAD TO CARRY SO MANY BALLS.

HEY, AOI-CHAN,
WE NEED TO HAVE A LITTLE CHAT...
AH, OF COURSE.
I ALSO HAVE SOME BUSINESS WITH YOU, HIRO.
W-WOW. A DIP PEN AND INK?
HEHE.
TA-DAH!
I'LL GIVE THESE TO YOU!
TO ME?
!
INK
BAKUN

YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE HESITANT.
A LONG TIME AGO I BOUGHT THESE ON AN IMPULSE, BUT IN THE END I NEVER USED THEM.
BUT IF IT'S YOU, HIRO, YOU PROBABLY WILL.
THERE'S NO WAY I COULD ACCEPT THIS!
I MEAN, I HAVE TO REFUSE BEING IN CHARGE OF ILLUSTRATIONS.
POMF
I'LL GIVE YOU THIS, TOO.
A BERET
WHAT? I JUST FEEL THAT IT'S IMPORTANT TO LOOK THE PART.
ARE YOU THE FASHIONABLE TYPE
.....
HOW RUDE! MY MIND IS ALWAYS UPDATED WITH WHAT'S TRENDY.
YOUR PERCEPTION OF MANGA ARTISTS IS ANCIENT.
PIPE.
UNFORTUNATELY, I COULDN'T BUY A PIPE.

I HAVE TO HAND IT TO MYSELF FOR ANTICIPATING SOMETHING LIKE THIS.
AHAHA
IT'S A BIT EMBAR-RASSING...
EVEN SO, IT LOOKS PRETTY COOL ON YOU.
AH, THAT REMINDS ME,
WE SHOULD THINK ABOUT A GENRE FOR OUR GAME.
WHICH ONE WOULD SELL THE BEST?
A FIRST PERSON SHOOTER?
OR MAYBE A TEAR JERKER?

HAA,
I WONDER IF THAT WOULD BE OKAY THOUGH?
MUMBLE MUMBLE
PER-HAPS AN EROGE ...?
THERE'S SO MUCH TO WORRY ABOUT.
WE DON'T EVEN HAVE ALL OUR MEMBERS.
HOW CAN YOU HAVE SO MUCH FUN LIKE THIS?

AOI -CHAN, AREN'T YOU SCARED ABOUT MAKING A GAME?
.....
HOW DO YOU PLAN ON MAKING A GAME
WITHOUT ANY KNOWLEDGE OR EXPERI-ENCE?
IN THE END, WE'LL PROBABLY FAIL.

WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?
RUB
AH!
I THINK... WITH MY HEART!
DÉJÀ VU AGAIN!?
I DON'T THINK BY THAT LOGIC.
WHAT GOOD IS THINKING ABOUT FAILURE BEFORE YOU EVEN TRY?

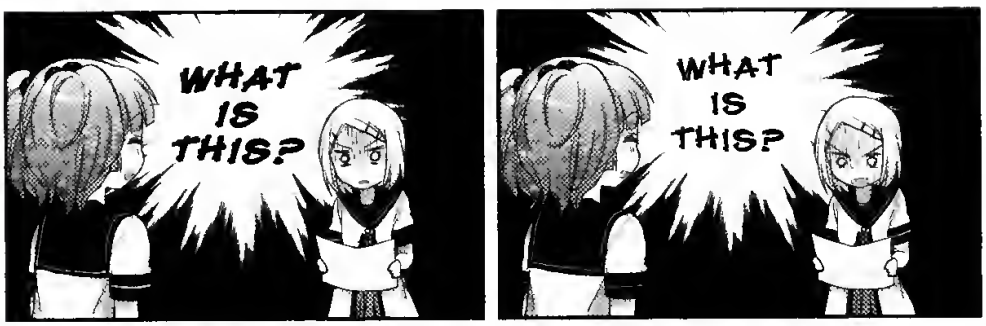
IF I WANT TO DO IT, I'LL DO IT.
FAILURE AND MINOR DETAILS LIKE THAT AREN'T WORTH WORRYING ABOUT.
AFTER ALL, WHAT'S IMPORTANT IS THE HEART!
...I SEE.
ALL THIS TIME...

I WAS FILLED WITH NOTHING BUT ANXIETY.
WHAT WOULD I DO IF THEY HATED ME?
WHAT WOULD I DO IF I FAILED?
I WOULD DO NOTHING BUT AVOID EVERYONE AND RUN AWAY.
...
SORRY,
I WANT THE HAIR PINS FROM BEFORE AFTER ALL.

I'LL DO IT.
INK
TAKE
I WANT TO DO MY BEST!
AOI-CHAN, THANK YOU.
DO THOSE HAIR PINS MAKE YOU THAT HAPPY?
THAT'S NOT IT.
UH, YEAH.
THAT'S GOOD TO HEAR.
I DON'T REALLY GET IT THOUGH.

YEAH...
.....
THIS IS HARD...
PAST ATTEMPTS AT DRAWING
I PROMISED TO SHOW YOU MY DRAWINGS.
I HAVE THEM RIGHT HERE.
REALLY?
EHEHE
YOSHIKAWA -SAN
TAKAOKA -SAN!
BUT I'M GETTING A BIT BETTER.
OR IS IT JUST MY IMAGINATION?

THAT'S RIGHT!
YOSHIKAWA -SAN IS A SKILLED ARTIST.
I CAN GET HER TO TEACH ME THE BASICS...
WOW...
HERE YOU GO! I'M PRETTY CONFIDENT ABOUT THIS ONE.



(IT WAS SO IMPORTANT, IT HAD TO BE SAID TWICE.)

ZUK